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23 November 1981

# Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 43/81)



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## NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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EGYPT

SPECULATIONS ON FUTURE POLITICAL SCENE AFTER AL-SADAT'S ASSASSINATION

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 244, 16-22 Oct 81 pp 34-38

[Article: "The West Created Him, and the West Laid Him to Rest; Egypt Wants To Forget"]

[Text] The moments that stood between Anwar al-Sadat and life were the actual celebration of the 6th of October anniversary. Those moments were tantamount to "a new crossing" for the Egyptian army which has begun revealing its innermost secrets.

What are the questions that Egypt, the Arab world and the whole world are facing after al-Sadat's departure from the scene? How will Egypt's new president, Husni Mubarak, handle what he inherited? Who are the heirs to al-Sadat's regime? What changes are looming on the horizon?

AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI which has closely followed recent developments in Egypt--in recent months we followed them hourly--and observed them from inside the country and abroad, is opening today the Egyptian file from the first crossing to the new crossing. It is trying to answer the questions that are being raised by means of conducting a historical inquiry also through a series of articles. The title of the first installment in the series is "Made by al-Sadat: Who Was with Him and Who Was against Him?"

The Egyptian event deserves more than a few pages devoted to it in a single issue. We will return to it in future issues.

He was buried quietly.

It were as though Egypt wanted to forget him quickly.

Cold sweat poured down [the bodies] of senior officials who had gone to Cairo to take part in his funeral. Police security measures were more than alarming.

The foreign guests who had come [to Cairo] to pay their last respects to their former ally did not dare accompany him to his final resting place. The distance that separated the procession from the burial site was less than 1 kilometer. Nevertheless, they did not dare accompany him.

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The funeral was a western, military funeral. It was by no means a popular, Egyptian, Arab funeral. It began at 11:15 a.m. on Saturday with a brief prayer service at the mosque of al-Ma'adi hospital before the body was taken away [from the hospital], and it ended with six military men and six civilians carrying the coffin on their shoulders to its final resting place. Husni Mubarak, the new Egyptian president was among those men.

Al-Sadat's son, Jamal, as well as his in-laws and close relatives attended the funeral. Near the hospital, on one of the banks of the Nile, a few teary-eyed men and women were seen. Were they weeping for the man who had departed, or were they weeping for Egypt which wasted years of its history following a mirage?

The coffin was carried to a military ambulance and then to a helicopter which carried it to al-Nasr City where al-Sadat had been shot and where he was buried. The city was built by Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, al-Sadat's former companion in the revolution, whose memory he had tried to obliterate during the years of his administration. From the helicopter the body, wrapped in the Egyptian flag, was carried to a military Jeep which proceeded slowly to the site of the ceremony while six officers carrying the late president's medals marched in front of a horse-drawn caisson.

In a question-filled atmosphere [mourners marched] to the beat of military music which was followed by a funereal tune (Chopin's symphony). Jamal Anwar al-Sadat, Husni Mubarak, "the heirs" to al-Sadat's legacy and Sudan's president Ja'far Numayri marched in the funeral. Numayri walked directly behind Mubarak. In the second row [behind them] French President Francois Mitterand, conspicuously surrounded by bodyguards walked amidst a large group of mourners. Beside him was Menahem Begin who was surrounded by bodyguards also.

On the same platform, where a few days earlier the stunning operation had been carried out, officials sat under the eagle of the Egyptian Revolution. Husni Mubarak stepped forward to offer his condolences to the late president's widow, who broke into tears. Her three daughters and al-Sadat's sister were attending to her.

Everything took place amidst security measures that turned al-Nasr City into an iron city which only Egyptians who had passes could penetrate. Thousands of policemen in their white uniforms were lined up to prevent any "violation" and to observe every action that took place nearby or at a distance. Meanwhile, hundreds of people gathered at a distance, far from the barricades set up by the security forces.

A military band saluted the late president while Jihan al-Sadat was heard sobbing loudly. A 21-gun salute proclaimed the death of a man and the end of an era.

Journalists counted eight heads of state who came to mourn the president. Among them were the heads of state of France, West Germany, Italy, Ireland, Liberia and Sudan. The King of Belgium and the Duke of Luxembourg were

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there also. Among the heads of government who attended were Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany, Calvo Sotelo of Spain, Menahem Begin of Israel, Falldin of Sweden and Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore. Mrs Simone Weil, chairperson of the European Council; Gaston Thorn, the chairman of the European Committee; and another number of European officials also attended the funeral. It was the U.S. delegation that stood out among other delegations because of the number of people in it. It included three former presidents: Jimmy Carter, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. In addition, Henry Kissinger, "the godfather" came to the funeral too.

What Will Happen Now?

After the Egyptian president was buried, all of Egypt, all the Arabs, in fact, the whole world was asking the question, what will happen now?

The question is primarily an Egyptian question. Al-Sadat's legacy is a burdensome one. The Egyptian-al-Sadat experience had yielded, even before the man was laid to rest, scores of dead and wounded and several hundred new prisoners who were arrested in Asyut. In the meantime, all Egyptians were seized by uncertainty over their feelings, beginning with officials and including the military establishment and the "heirs" themselves.

In answering the question, what will happen now, attention turned first to Husni Mubarak whose "fate" brought him to the top of the power structure after members of the al-Sadat regime itself who had been vying for power [dropped out of the race] one right after the other. 'Uthman Ahmad 'Uthman dropped out; then Mansur Hasan dropped out; and then al-Sadat was overthrown and Mubarak remained in the forefront, ready to assume responsibility for the period of transition.

Creating an image of the period of transition with the possible surprises it may bring can be confined to making a few points, which in turn remain subject to any shakeup.

--An announced Egyptian commitment to pursue the course which al-Sadat pursued so as to preserve "the gains" of Camp David with regard to the evacuation of Sinai next April. This commitment with which Mubarak inaugurated his term in front of Washington and Tel Aviv was linked to the state of emergency in Egypt; to the state of alert in the Sixth Fleet in the east Mediterranean; to the joint military maneuvers that are to take place soon; and to an invitation for Mubarak himself to visit the United States so he can be tested once again. In addition, Mubarak was invited to visit Israel which he has not yet visited.

Inside the country the new president is expected to make a series of decisions that will require first and foremost broad changes and reorganization at the top of the military establishment. In this regard it is possible to imagine changes that will include the principal leaders, beginning with Field Marshal Abu Ghazalah, the minister of defense; the director of military intelligence; and senior military leaders in the various corps

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of the army. The military figure who is a candidate to succeed Abu Ghazalah [as minister of defense] is Maj Gen Muhammad Nabih, present chief of operations.

It has been noticed so far that Mubarak still appears to exercise almost total control over the armed forces. However, he did not wish to start his term by using the armed forces in operations to curb the violence that Egypt had been experiencing in more than one city and one area. These acts of violence peaked in the incidents of Asyut. Then there was an attempt to seize the home of the minister of interior, al-Nabawi Isma'il and to hold him as a political hostage in return for the release of detainees.

Mubarak's concern for not mobilizing the armed forces to confront the domestic violence is principally due to his fear that these forces with their various inclinations may join each other in solidarity and turn against the regime. This is a state of lack of confidence in which the regime must tread softly, in the aftermath of the shots that were fired on the 6th of October.

If the Egyptian armed forces will see this radical change in their leadership in the next few days, the police, on the contrary, will not be subjected to any changes to speak of. This is not because al-Nabawi Isma'il rushed to declare his allegiance to Husni Mubarak in the first moments that followed the assassination of al-Sadat, but rather because the police agency in particular has been prepared for years for [operations] to curb domestic unrest. For many months the police have proven their competence in repressing secret and public religious and political organizations. The police also proved their competence in pursuing the leaders of the opposition.

--Speaking of the opposition, al-Sadat's assassination and the repercussions of that event will result in keeping detained Egyptian opposition leaders in prison for a long period of time where they will stay without trial or hope of being released next April, which is the date that al-Sadat had set for opening their files after he would have completed the Sinai negotiations.

Since the activities of the Egyptian opposition parties (the Labor party and the Grouping party) are presently suspended, and the Liberal party has declared its loyalty to Husni Mubarak, this situation will remain unchanged for at least the next 6 months. The ruling party (the National Democratic party), which nominated Mubarak for the presidency, remains the only political force on the domestic scene which is taking action without being checked. Mubarak is supposed to take action next spring to change the party leaders whom he had no hand in appointing, such as Kamal al-Shadhli, the secretary general of the party, who was appointed by Mrs Jihan al-Sadat; Fikri Makram 'Ibayd; and Hilmi 'Abd-al-'Akhar. Mubarak knows a great deal about the suspect deals and the operations in which they were involved as middlemen.

--Regarding the "working team" which can assist the president, the name

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of Sayyid Mar'i is being proposed as that of the man who will more likely head the new government if Mubarak does not want to keep that responsibility for himself. 'Uthman Ahmad 'Uthman could have been a candidate had it not been for the fact that his name is tied to the impoverishing "open-door policy" which al-Sadat pursued. No change is expected in the presidency of the People's Assembly [now held by] Dr Sufi Abu Talib or in the presidency of the Advisory Council [now held by] Dr Subhi 'Abd-al-Karim. Both men are proteges of the First Lady; they were her professors at the university.

Mubarak's desire to cooperate with Abu Talib and with 'Abd-al-Karim in particular is due to the same reason that forces him to seek the aid of Sayyid Mar'i in the next era. He wants to give evidence that he has not deviated from al-Sadat's policy and has not gotten rid of his men. He is doing so to reduce the intensity of the struggle in the upper echelons of power.

Chief among the new names that are likely "to shine" in Mubarak's new administration is Maj Gen Sha'ban, Husni Mubarak's office manager. He is a candidate for one of the sensitive positions in the cabinet. Another candidate is Usamah al-Baz, present undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a close [associate] of Mubarak. He is a candidate for the position of minister of foreign affairs. [Another candidate] is Safwat al-Sharif who is expected to assume the position of minister of information, considering that he is first and foremost a constant friend.

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IRAN

KHOMAYNI FANATICISM SEEN HASTENING DOOM

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 248 14 Sep 81 pp 30-31

[Article by Abou Sameh: "The Regime's Death Knell"]

[Text] Khomeyni has chosen to lean on a feudal-minded clergy. From this will spring the inevitable confrontation in which the Iranian revolution will know those on its side, and will reject those who cling to a medieval ideology.

A death struggle is henceforth clearly joined between the absolutist and backward regime of Khomeyni and the opposition, which has shifted from self-defense to the offensive. There are serious indications that the Tehran regime has set out on the path which must lead to its downfall. The attempt which cost the lives of President Raja'i and Prime Minister Bahonar attests to the determination and strength of those who wish to have done with a regime built on imposture.

Within a few weeks, "Islamic courts" have officially ordered the execution of over 900 persons, most of them OMPI [Iranian Khalq Mojahedin Organization] militants.

This wave of legalized assassinations indicates both the terrorist ideology which animates the fundamentalist clergy, and their distress. The new minister of justice Mohammed Ashghari has described those courts as "effective instruments." He has declared to the newspaper ETTALAAT that he plans to integrate the courts into his ministry. From the viewpoint of the present leaders, that would lend more legality to the summary executions which invariably follow the quick parodies of trials given those arrested--in certain cases after simple denunciation without proof.

Khomeyni, for his part, is content to multiply speeches in which such terms as "saboteur," "counter-revolutionary," "hypocrite," etc., serve to designate all those who in fact oppose the unleashing of terror. Thus, in the speech made at his residence on 22 August to a delegation of police officers, he asked that "the whole population mobilize against them." Raising to highest pitch the frenzied fanaticism he represents, he has exalted to

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the rank of "heroine" a mother who, having handed over her son to the Islamic courts for being a marxist-leninist, was filmed for television with her son just before he faced the firing squad. The viewers, aghast, saw her say to the youth of 20: "You ceased to be my son when you left the path of Islam, the path that leads to God, and I thanked God when I learned that you were to be executed!"

Under what pressures, threats, or blackmail was she led to bless her son's agony? Someday, no doubt, history will tell us.

Fanaticism

"We are 36 million Raja'i" was the slogan chorused by demonstrators gathered by the Islamic Republic Party for the mourning ceremony held at Tehran university 1 September.

That fanaticized mob, alas! recalls that the disinherited people of Iran has been conditioned over centuries by an idealizing and medieval image of Islam, and that today it is continually invited to regenerate the revolution with its blood, and to "raise up martyrs." It is virtually hypnotized by that appeal, which prevents it from becoming aware of the true facts influencing its daily life. To attain the kingdom of God on earth, the believer, so galvanized, must then accept, as does the "Soul of God"--for that is the meaning of Khomeyni's given name, Ruhollah--that the country be engulfed in a sea of blood.

We are thus witnessing the undoing--conscious or not--of a revolution unleashed in the last quarter century, by recourse to a Shiite ritual exalted by tendencies nursed since the Middle Ages in the imagination of a people doomed to misery, illiteracy, injustice, and the cruelest of despotisms.

Bani Sadr, a son of that people, has indeed tried to rise above those backward trends, and--as few others have done--to set forth the problem, in his books, in terms of opposition between "imperialism, on the one hand, and young developing nations on the other." He was the first to pay for Khomeyni's fanaticism.

Bani Sadr particularly tried to explain how the American superpower and its allies have sought, through militarization of third-world countries, a solution to their structural economic crisis, so true is it that arms deliveries to countries--oil producing or not--such as Iran under the Shah, or Saudi Arabia as at present, is the only possible means of absorbing the oil income of those countries and maximizing the power of the multinationals which dictate their will to other third-world countries and influence their economic policies.

The true Iranian revolution has never been the work of Ayatollah Khomeyni, for the masses well and truly rose up against an order at once royal and imperial, which was always denounced not only by Bani Sadr, but also by an

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opposition very active since 1963. At that time clandestine organizations--Khalq Fedayin and Mojahedin, and dissident groups of the communist Tudeh party rebelling against its "bureaucratic militantism," and known as the Nationalist Progressive Movement, created conditions necessary for effective mobilization of the masses, the intellectuals, and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

The "White Revolution" of the Shah, decided on in the early 1960's under the pretext of introducing technology and modernizing socio-economic structures, meanwhile aggravated the condition of Iran's economic and industrial structures. The country had by then become the Middle Eastern relay point for the products of the multinationals. It has thereby been placed under the direct management of the American military-industrial complex.

The first consequence was destruction of the structures of the mercantile lower middle class encompassed by the Bazaar, whose traditions go back to the 11th century, and which was traditionally linked to the parallel authority imposed by the ayatollahs as early as the Middle Ages. The latter indeed derived all their power from taxes paid by Bazaar merchants. In addition to the tenth of his income which all Moslems must pay into the Islamic treasury, the Bazaar merchants contributed a fifth of theirs. This had set up the Shiite clergy as a veritable parallel institution. They had their say in everything, from teaching in villages and towns to marriages and the varied dealings arising from the social life of most of the forsaken of this world in Iran. The ayatollah even made Qom a rival capital to Tehran.

But the "White Revolution," by clearing the way for an Iranian capitalism dependent on the American multinationals, and by transforming the army into an adjunct of the 6th Fleet with the intention of providing "the Gulf's policeman" with the most sophisticated equipment, has been the source of a social mutation fatal for the clergy. The merchants and people of the towns--ruined, disintegrated, and unable to compete with the products of the American metropolis--had no choice, short of rallying to their traditional ayatollahs, but to join the underground. In this way the resistance, in which the Mojahedin have become preponderant because they have linked Islamic principles of social justice to the necessary struggle for national independence, has found among workers, peasants, and small merchants thousands of allies and partisans.

#### Recovery

Caught off guard, the Shiite clergy from that moment made the tactical choice of allying itself with the revolutionaries. But until Khomeyni's arrival in Tehran, all mass demonstrations were truly revolutionary actions whose Islamic character, owing to Iran's culture, was their most striking aspect. However, from the moment of Ayatollah Taleghani's assassination--and he had served as the link between the traditional clergy and the revolutionary movement, being on that account known as "the Red"--the die was cast. Khomeyni chose to lean not on the popular revolution but on the members of

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a feudal minded clergy. To that end he used his spiritual authority to recapture the explosive subjectivity of the masses in revolt--most of them illiterate--and to set up a dominant and dictatorial political party.

From that moment, the split took on the aspect of a conflict between revolution and reaction. It could only degenerate into the ruthless confrontation which we now see. There is no doubt that in such conditions the Iranian revolution will know how to identify its friends, and reject those who cling hopelessly to a medieval ideology.

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LIBYA

FORMER DIPLOMAT ACCUSES REGIME OF MISREPRESENTATION

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 238, 4-10 Sep 81 p 37

[Interview with 'Abd-al-Salam 'Ali 'Aylah; date and place not specified: "Washington Remains the Libyan Regime's Primary Economic Partner"]

[Text] 'Abd-al-Salam 'Ali 'Aylah, former charge d'affaires at the Libyan embassy in India is considered today one of the most active figures in the Libyan opposition abroad. Following the announcement of the Libyan-South Yemen-Ethiopian treaty and after the two Libyan airplanes were shot down over the Gulf of Sidra we interviewed him about the difficulties of the Libyan regime and the opposition's reactions to the new factors on the scene.

[Question] What is the Libyan opposition's evaluation of the trilateral treaty between Tripoli, Aden and Addis Ababa, and what are the effects of that treaty on existing conditions in the Red Sea area?

[Answer] The conclusion of the trilateral treaty between Tripoli, Aden and Addis Ababa affirms the fact that the Libyan regime is involved in the Soviet Union's plan in the Arab region. The principal motive behind this complicity with the Soviet Union is to hide the internal crises that al-Qadhdhafi's group is being exposed to in government. Al-Qadhdhafi and his people have been draining the Libyan treasury, squandering the country's funds abroad and upsetting the status quo in the region in the interests of the Soviet Union.

[Question] Some western political circles are saying that the treaty was a response to challenges from Washington and that the confrontation in the air over the Gulf of Sidra may have been one episode in a lengthy series of [such] episodes.

[Answer] This analysis [of the situation] is tantamount to "verbal fraud." The United States is the Libyan regime's primary economic partner. This is confirmed by oil sales to Washington, by the freedom of U.S. firms working in Libya and by the profits that are reaped and amassed in foreign banks, not to mention those that are used in areas that benefit the Libyan people.

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And here I wonder, how can the power of America be affected by small countries like South Yemen, Ethiopia and Libya? When the rulers [of such nations] become involved in a strategy that goes beyond their modest capabilities, they are gambling with the future of peaceful nations. Who told al-Qadhdhafi that the Libyan people want to become involved in blood baths in which innocent people lose their lives to serve the interests of Soviet imperialism? The incident of the airplanes in the Gulf of Sidra is actually no more than an operation to distract the Libyan people.

Simplified Strategy

[Question] Arab diplomatic sources are saying that the Libyan president has given up on the effectiveness of the Steadfastness and Confrontation countries and that he decided to expand the "strategic compass" towards Addis Ababa? What do you think of that?

[Answer] This geo-political perspective is as far as it can be from the colonel's mind and from his ability to distinguish between what is white and what is black in Middle East alliances. His strategy may be summarized in selling the oil of his country to the United States of America, receiving its price in hard currency and then turning to the Soviet Union and purchasing from it complete arsenals of weapons for which he pays cash because Moscow accepts only cash payments in hard currency. Then he recruits skinny African mercenaries in the army and sends them to the Western Sahara, to Lebanon and to moderate Arab countries. Thus all the various interpretations advanced by some analysts to add a few cosmetic touches to the colonel's practices become invalid. To affirm the extemporaneous and affected nature of the trilateral treaty, let me ask, what was the magic tool that enabled Aden, Tripoli and Addis Ababa to overcome their thorny disputes with regard to the Eritrean question? It is known that Addis Ababa never made a truce with the Eritreans despite its oppressive attitude. The fact of the matter is that the Libyan president once again ignored all his obligations, covered up all the existing problems on the earth and opened the treasury of the Libyan people to Mengistu Haile-Mariam so he can stand on his feet again. And here too we hear the old worn-out tune about the treaty being the outcome of an awareness of the serious nature of Ethiopia's location on the western shores of the Straits of Bab al-Mandab and an awareness of Ethiopia's new role in driving away imperialism and its influence in Africa. This is gross misrepresentation and a serious obfuscation of facts and events.

[Question] [It's been said that] the Libyan opposition has only one perspective on things: it focuses on the regime's faults and ignores the fact that Libya is a small country whose population does not exceed 3 million. The Libyans have turned themselves into a strong army, well armed and well prepared.

[Answer] This statement is one of the false statements promoted by the spokesmen of the Libyan regime to cover up the regime's domestic crisis and to silence those who speak against the [ongoing] process of impoverishing and starving the Libyan people. The Libyan people are living in a vacuum of

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economic and social standards. Furthermore, the number of illiterate people in the ranks of the population is growing. This is a deliberate objective pursued by the regime to keep people unaware of its numerous flaws. In the meantime al-Qadhdhafi empties his pockets to more than 100 organizations and agencies in Beirut that receive monthly allowances from him. Is there a transgression greater than that of eliminating the opposition abroad out of fear of them and their continued efforts to reveal the truth?

[Question] Are you not afraid of being eliminated? There are numerous precedents in this regard.

[Answer] I am not afraid of death. My guiding principle is to expose this regime, and my death would be for the sake of the people I love. I ask that they be spared from the glittering revolutionary slogans.

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MOROCCO

STATUS OF OPPOSITION EXAMINED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French No 1083, 7 Oct 81 pp 20-22

[Article by Siradiou Diallo: "Morocco: In the Kingdom of the Unexpected"]

[Text] Morocco has not been spared -- far from it -- by the economic crisis affecting nearly all the nonoil-producing countries of the Third World. Unemployment and shortages, combined with a deafening refrain of labels, gave rise, in the Moroccan kingdom, to the June riots, which were mercilessly put down. Trials and sentences decided upon and handed down in the shadows caught even the most seasoned observers off guard. Such was the case of the trial of five members of the Political Bureau of the USFP (Socialist Union of Popular Forces), which resulted, on 24 September in Rabat, in the sentencing of three of them, including party leader Abderrahim Bouabid (JEUNE AFRIQUE, No 1082), to a year in prison without possibility of parole.

Assuming that the time of pardon and oblivion is not, in spite of everything, so far off, as some whisper, sunny days nevertheless do not appear to be right ahead. Hundreds of political and trade union militants, members of supporters of the USFP, are still parading before the courts, if not already sentenced to long terms in Casablanca and the main provincial capitals.

And yet, in the midst of this wave of repression, it is less the arbitrariness than freedom that strikes the observer used to the political mores in Africa in the southern Sahara. Absolutely! The astonishment is first of all manifested in the court, where both attorneys and the accused make use of a freedom of tone, style and manners which, apart from Senegal, has disappeared from the tropical scene at the same time as the colonial helmet and the white uniforms of the cercles commanders.

Furthermore, the relatives, friends and militants authorized to attend the sessions do not hesitate to express their opinions noisily. At the trial of Bouabid and his friends, their supporters massed in the courtroom applauded every speech by the socialist leader, while nearly 200 lawyers from all the bar associations of Morocco were anxious, dressed in their robes, not to conceal their severe disapproval of this "trial of opinion."

The same freedom can be seen, it would appear, in the opposition press. AL-BAYANE, the daily newspaper of the PPS (Party of Progress and Socialism, communist) harshly criticized the official policy and even challenges the government. During the



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trial of the leaders of the USFP, that newspaper published the statements of Bouabid before his judges and numerous accounts of solidarity. In one of its editorials signed by Ali Yata, secretary general of the PPS and a figure in the international communist movement, it went so far as to state that "acquittal is absolutely essential."

But while that ideologically advanced newspaper is free, the USFP press itself has been banned since the bloody riots in Casablanca in June: "We are journalists reduced to unemployment because of the will of the people," explained the colleagues of AL-MOHARRIR (daily in Arabic) and LIBERATION (weekly in French), with a humor that in no way -- quite the contrary -- alters their militant convictions. Curiously enough, while the newspapers are "arrested," the journalists themselves circulate "freely" (except for Karchaoui, editor of AL-MOHARRIR, arrested following the 20 June riots). They can even express themselves elsewhere, I was told by one source close to the government, for everything here is as if it were not so much the agents as the media that were to blame.

Moreover, while freedom of information is watched and limited depending on the whims and preoccupations of the sovereign, freedom of speech is total. In the offices, factories and on the jobs, civil servants and workers neither whisper nor check their discontent. It is not rare for supporters and adversaries of the government to come to blows over arguments, without fear of being called in for questioning.

At home, whether they be among friends or in the presence of a foreign visitor, Moroccan intellectuals spend hours analyzing and criticizing the decisions of the government, without fear of consequences. Evenings in Agdal, the residential area of Rabat where most of the leaders of the USFP live, have nothing to envy of the Latin Quarter. Lacking the Parisian cafes, the comfortable salons of the villas and the apartments provide a framework, mint tea and tangerines at the same type of encounters. Not only do they endlessly discuss the burning issues of the day, but they weigh and analyze the men in government, going over their slightest deeds and gestures with a fine-toothed comb.

Nor are the leaders of the other African countries spared. How much is Nyerere worth? What does Nigeria want? Bourguiba is a great statesman! Let's talk about Houphouet-Boigny. But the only one on whom there is unanimity in these circles of freedom is undeniably Leopold Sedar Senghor. After listening to my colleagues, I believe that I better understand the love that the poet president feels for Morocco, the first country where he went after he voluntarily gave up his office. He knows or undoubtedly feels that it is the only country in Africa where both the government and the opposition have unbounded admiration for him. Paradoxes flourish here and at every turn of the road. While a police officer constantly watches the headquarters of the USFP in the Agdal district, while plain-clothes men are permanently camped in the cafe across the street, even having, it is said, an apartment in the next building, members and visitors come and go freely, without paying the slightest attention to the surveillance.

What is more, while with the sentencing of five out of the eight members of the Political Bureau, the USFP was decapitated, its cadres still free nevertheless continue their feverish activity. They meet, debate and decide. They probably

bring increased vigilance down upon themselves. They keep the party machine in operation, maintain the necessary connections with members and receive journalists. They even sit on the terrace of the Hilton or the Tour Hassan in the company of representatives of the foreign press, warning their interlocutor about a given customer sitting nearby, saying in the most relaxed manner: "He is a cop that our movement knows, but what do you expect? He has to earn a living."

Nor does the government harbor any particular animosity toward the opposition. While hiding behind the infallibility of His Majesty and while constantly referring to quotes from some royal speech, the speaker admits with good grace the worth of such and such a member of the opposition. However, "they are not realistic," one hears. "They have to understand that they can't have the moon," we were told by one high official, irritated by criticisms of the spiraling prices in recent months.

Another minister told us that he was not only surprised, but sincerely pained by the sentencing of Bouabid and his friends. "Abderrahim is a good person and very respectable," the minister continued. "Unfortunately, he let his troops drag him too far. I hope that in the future, he will manage not to let himself go so much. Furthermore, I am convinced that with his great goodness, His Majesty will not be long in granting a pardon so that Abderrahim will regain his freedom, because prison is not the place for a man like him."

In other words, the break between the government and the opposition does not seem to have reached the point of no return. "Of course, we are not far from the irreparable," admits Fathallah Oualalou, USFP deputy from Rabat and professor of economics. "But," he hastens to point out, "we shall explore every possible way to safeguard and, if possible, consolidate the democratic experiment." We heard the same language from Radi Abdelouahed, head of the socialist parliamentary group in the Chamber of Deputies, whom we asked whether his comrades and he would resume their place in Parliament for the session beginning on 9 October.

We know that the USFP, which has 14 deputies and which was opposed to the extension of the legislature ratified by the 30 May 1980 referendum, had threatened to boycott the Chamber.

In that case, Hassan II replied, that group would declare its own illegality. "No decision on our withdrawal from Parliament has yet been made," Radi told us, then added: "In any case, we shall do everything to safeguard the democratic experiment, of whose benefits and limitations we are well aware."

All Moroccans agree that this democratic experiment must be pursued, even if they believe that it resembles a fragile plant that deserves to be protected and watered with love and delicacy. Naturally, government and opposition disagree on the nature and content of democracy. The former believes that it is above all the expression of the goodness and greatness of the sovereign, who was in no way forced to promote it. The latter thinks that democracy quite naturally stems from the evolution of the country and more particularly, from the struggles that preceded and hastened independence.

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This difference in analyses and sensitivities naturally gives rise to different forms of conduct, but everyone defends the democratic experiment. "It is something deeply anchored in the spirit of our fellow countrymen," said Mahjoubi Aherdan, minister of state in charge of posts, telegraph and telephones and declared champion of the Berber cause. "Democracy is in keeping with the spirit of tolerance and openness that characterizes the Moroccan people," Dey Ould Sidi Baba, president of the Chamber of Deputies, told us in his slow and barely audible voice.

Government and opposition are also side by side in defending the sovereignty of the kingdom. They also seem resolved to prevent Morocco from being cut off from any part of its historic territory. All look as if they had been burned alive as soon as the delicate problem of the Sahara is brought up.

The Moroccans believe that their country is the victim of a true conspiracy aimed at gradually dismembering it, a conspiracy at the heart of which is Algeria, now the scapegoat of all the evils afflicting Morocco. "Just look at the map of Africa," says Aherdan, "and you will see that by swallowing up Moroccan territory, Algeria is like a pregnant woman."

Calmer but equally convinced, Dey Ould Sidi Baba, who looks more like an old retired teacher than a political leader, uses pedagogy to show us the grounds for the Moroccan position on the Sahara. Opening a Larousse dictionary published in 1923, he shows us a map of Morocco indicating that the kingdom, whose area is now 660,000 square kilometers, had 800,000 at the time! He explains that Morocco was eaten away by France and Spain. It is that philosophy, inherited from the colonial era, Dey Ould Sidi Baba says, which pushes Algeria to act as it does. And, he concludes peremptorily, "We shall not let any more be taken away from us by anyone."

One USFP leader and not the least important one states that "the pro-Algerian tendency of the French PS reflects both a mercantile spirit -- oil and gas oblige -- and the guilt complex from which every French person suffers regarding independent Algeria." Going further, he said that even in the support it gave the USFP at the time of the recent trials of members of its leadership, the French PS acted in an "offhand and irresponsible manner," demanding the release of Bouabid and his friends. "The French have no right to demand anything from Morocco because our country is an independent, sovereign state!"

It is an astonishing kingdom where, despite the controversies between the government and the opposition, everyone joins together in a bloc as soon as it is a question of the essential thing: the nation and its institutions. It is true that Morocco is one of the few nations on the African continent which, having survived the colonial intrusion, has remained faithful for 13 centuries to its monarchic foundations, with pride but without excessive chauvinism because Rabat is without a doubt the African capital whose streets bear the greatest number of names of countries, heroes and martyrs on the continent.

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SAUDI ARABIA

EGYPT'S GHURBAL SAYS NO BREAK IN SAUDI CONTACTS

JN011428 London REUTER in English 1315 GMT 1 Nov 81

[Text] Beirut, 1 Nov (REUTER)--Contacts between Egypt and Saudi Arabia have never stopped despite the severance of relations between Riyadh and Cairo, the Egyptian ambassador to Washington said in an interview published today.

Ambassador Ashra Ghurbal told the Beirut weekly magazine MONDAY MORNING: "Let me say that contacts between us and our Saudi brothers have never stopped. We have had continuous contacts at all time." He declined to give details.

Saudi Arabia, along with most other Arab states, cut off ties with Egypt in 1978 because of the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement.

Asked about prospects for a rapprochement between Egypt and Saudi Arabia following the assassination of President Anwar al-Sadat, Mr Ghurbal said he thought the "misunderstanding" by the Saudi and other Arabs of Egypt's intentions was now beginning to clear up. "I look forward to that relationship being strengthened continuously," he added.

The Saudi press has called on the Arabs not to force new Egyptian President Husni Mubarak into abrogating the peace accord with Israel and has said he should be given a 1-year period of grace to set the Egyptian house in order.

Mr Ghurbal also told MONDAY MORNING he did not believe the tension between Egypt and Libya and between Sudan and Libya would develop into an all-out war.

"We hope that (Libyan leader Mu'ammr) al-Qadhafi will see the light and simmer down in his policy and his action," he said.

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TUNISIA

OPPOSITION LEADER ASSESSES DOMESTIC POLITICS

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 250, 12-25 Oct 81 pp 29-31

[Article by Ibrahim Tobal: "Bourguibism at an Impasse"]

[Text] [Text] In this article, Ibrahim Tobal, leader of the Tunisian National Opposition Movement (MONT), a prestigious figure in the entire Tunisian national movement and the author of numerous works and studies on his country, examines the regime's achievements and presents to progressives in his country proposals that might serve as a basis for a revolutionary alternative to Bourguibism, which is rejected by the people as a whole.

At all times and in all places, the old palace formulas are definitely the only responses that the Destourian regime in Tunisia is still capable of providing for the economic, political, moral and cultural crisis through which Tunisian society is passing. The king, queen and their courtisans amuse themselves and their gallery, for whom only life at court counts.

As a result, the deeds and gestures of First Lady Wassila Bourguiba are the bases for the analyses of commentators on national political life and diplomatic reporters who spend most of their time on the lookout for his slightest movements, watching over her meetings and receptions in order to learn who is now in favor and who has lost that spot. She knows this and since she has more than one card in her hand, she orchestrates scenarios of imaginary power only to destroy them immediately and spreads the most unlikely rumors the better to deny them later. Finally, she occupies the scene and the pack of social-climbing courtisans, while her husband reigns and governs with the same arrogant scorn for his lauders, the same faith in his star and the same vigorous subtle and selective repression aimed at his adversaries.

Bourguiba's facetious remarks and enigmatic phrases now take the place of "orientations," which are pompously reproduced as such in the headlines of newspapers. If he should wish to snap his fingers at the world and prove that his health is back to normal, he shows off with a "vigorous dive" in his private swimming pool at the Skanes Palace before television cameras, like Mao crossing the Yangtze River or... Idi Amin taking a bath fully clothed, under the amused (and gently mocking) eye of his guests. This is vulgar childishness and outward serenity for idle tourists who bring government down to the level of a circus, where the audience vies with him in absurdity.

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This is the way the government goes, while the drama of an inevitable succession continues, pitting, not the regime's cliques and clans against one another, but all of the people against that same regime established by violence.

Everything From Bourguiba

The so-called factional struggles that one witnesses daily -- and those of which nothing is seen -- actually serve only to veil the total paralysis of the government in each of its component parts and taken as a whole, with the blockage stemming from a political system imposed on the Tunisian people over 25 years ago.

The last congress of the Neo Destourian Party, made to order for the new prime minister, Mohamed M'Zali, aimed to kill two birds with one stone: first of all, making people forget another congress held 2 years earlier, a congress that confirmed the action of Hedi Nouira, whose 10 years in power ended with two blood baths (January 1978 and January 1980); and giving M'Zali and his team a political machine that could support and second the government in its task.

Actually, the political choices were made before and outside the congress, which then had but to ratify them: just another way of making people believe that a page was being turned.

The brief period of time separating the two congresses is less the manifestation of internal quarrels within the party or the government (such quarrels are always swept aside when the perpetuity of the regime is at stake) than the result of political exhaustion, fear and confusion in the face of the unknown, an unknown that is now being forged in the increasingly obvious meeting of the political opposition and the growing social opposition.

Consequently, the Destourian regime is at a deadend, after having exhausted all the traditional means to last, from petty tactical maneuvers of recovering the undecided to the use of the army against the UGTT [Tunisian General Federation of Labor] demonstrators.

Is it not an ingenious idea that he proposes to us for emerging from the crisis? His idea can be summed up in three points:

- 1) the establishment (against his will) of pluralism, which we see as a way of getting rid of ballast before the rising peril. That is why it remains limited, selective and subject to review. It can deceive only the blind about the monopolistic ambitions of the Neo Destourian Party with respect to power.
- 2) the evolution toward an electoral list including more candidates than the number of seats to be filled, then toward freedom offered to political currents to present their own lists, with the bonus promise of being recognized as such and legalized if they passed the threshold of 5 percent of the votes cast; and
- 3) the release of political prisoners, stemming more from the fear of the same perils and the desire to appease in order to remain than from a sudden awareness of the ineffectiveness of systematic repression. However, this attitude is not general because Tunisian prisons are now overflowing with political prisoners.

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The release of certain members of the opposition was planned with a taste for spectacle, but a spectacle for nothing insofar as no one is unaware that, far from being the fruit of a presidential pardon, the release was the result of social struggles that had never attained such intensity and of constant and effective international pressure.

Naturally, the image of clemency that the government and its leader wanted to give of themselves conceals great Machiavellianism. Of all these ups and downs, one essential thing remains: Everything comes from Bourguiba and everything goes back to him, no matter what is said about his sickness and distance from affairs of state. He assumes direct responsibility for the repression and the massacres, even if, like Pontius Pilate, he does not miss a chance to wash his hands of them and to find the necessary alibis. Nour, Sayah and now M'Zali are but the executors of the master's will, in the good Destourian tradition consisting of distributing roles in order better to manage the system's crises. Bourguiba's retirement and the death of his reign will inevitably coincide, no matter who the heir is to be. He knows this himself, repeating: "I am the system!"

Basing a strategy on a future "continuator" means heading straight for failure, in our opinion. For us, taking responsibility for what comes after Bourguiba means impugning all pretenders from the regime, whoever they might be.

Social Peace

This being the case, while the problem of the succession to Bourguiba at the head of state and its different agencies constitutes the background against which the internal struggles of the Neo Destourian Party take place, the crucial problems affecting the Tunisian people remain whole.

The Nour government, strengthened in December 1977 by technocrats, did not succeed in mastering the economic and social crisis that raged. It was unable to make a precise diagnosis of the nature of the crisis and its political effects. Today, the M'Zali government is getting mired down in the same morass. The causes are attributed to the world economic depression, the frantic consumption of the Tunisian people (two-thirds of whom are now on the brink of malnutrition) or... meteorology. It has to observe, however, that neither the wage freeze (corresponding to a clear cut in the purchasing power of the masses), nor the transit facilities granted by the EEC to textile exporters, nor even the influx of petrodollars from tourists from the Gulf and Saudi Arabia has helped solve the crisis.

M'Zali is doomed, in short-range terms, to make to "the good people" the same confession of failure as his predecessor: "The day will come when those who have a job, however minimal and poorly paid, will be happy compared with those who have no job at all."

This is a joyous prospect when one realizes that Tunisia already has some 500,000 unemployed, real or disguised, that plans now being carried out coldly leave 50,000 job applications unfulfilled a year, that some 100,000 children are sent away from the schools each year, while nearly 300,000 immigrant workers are -- despite the temporary, and highly illusory, bright spot -- about to undergo the fate of the immigrant Arab workers in Europe: massive deportation.

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The failure of the Neo-Destourian political line is completely due to the conscious, organized refusal of workers to let themselves be subjugated to the national and social plans. In January 1978, the government's objective was to obtain, by brutal, bloody repression -- with the help of a plot carefully hatched by Mohamed Sayah and Abdallah Ferhat, but with the benevolent complicity of Nouira, and all under Bourguiba's personal umbrella -- what it could not obtain by political pressure on UGTT leaders: social peace. In other words, the zeal of the movement for demands and the stifling of the workers' aspiration to the autonomy of their organization. "The UGTT must defend work more than workers." This watchword of Hedi Nouira is now taken from him by his successors, whose verbal liberalism poorly conceals the desire to curb the trade union federation, but gently this time, because the results of violence turned out to be mediocre.

This frantic search for "social peace" is but the required political pendant of the economic line followed since 1970 by the regime and consists, under the auspices of the 1972 and 1974 laws, of making Tunisia "a fiscal paradise for foreign investors," mainly French and West German, of giving more and more room to imperialism and neocolonialism and of hurrying the Tunisian economy into the world capitalist market through industrial subcontracting and export industries closely controlled by the multinational firms.

The extension of the war in Lebanon and the transfer of the headquarters of the Arab League to Tunis constituted a historic opportunity and an unexpected backing for the Tunisian commercial and financial bourgeoisie, which took advantage of it to open the doors to foreign banks, with the aid of legislation. A proposed society underlies the whole: building a "median society." It should be noted here that the terms of "class" has been banned from the official political vocabulary, making it necessary to quickly invent this neologism in order to avoid talking of a "middle class society."

After 10 years of the Nouira government and 2 years of the M'Zali government, how is the laborious transition going? It is definitely not blocked, but it is marking time and time inevitably plays against the completion of the regime's "grand design."

The delays registered in all fields, the deficit in the trade balance and payments, the internal fiscal pressure that weighs heavily on national producers and the exorbitant costs paid by the government, out of public monies, to foreign investors, without any counterpart, and so on, are the obvious signs of the exhaustion which the regime can fight only by yielding a little more on government sovereignty and the people's means.

The official explanation of the economic stagnation by the effects of the world crisis do not exhaust the subject. Today as yesterday, those in government want to make people believe that it is a blind process. For us, we are seeing the results of a deliberate choice made in 1970 and even slightly before that date. Not all developing countries endure the world crisis in the same manner. That manner depends precisely on the choices of economic policy made in preceding years.

The vice of the official explanation, a traditional one at the outset, stems from the fact that they try to attribute to a "foreign phenomenon" that which should



be blamed on internal decisions made to serve precise interests of class and the strategy to dominate. The fruit of this disastrous policy is that we are now witnessing the withdrawal of some foreign investors with juicy profits in their pockets and the failure of local entrepreneurs.

"Hot and Cold"

More than ever, the "median society" is part of the illusions maintained by official propaganda. There has never been such an obvious split between the mass of impoverished Tunisians (this is not a metaphore) and the minority of the privileged who became rich in the euphoric business climate of 1972-1974. There has never been such a gap between workers and management, local or foreign exploiters. Even the most rights to retirement pay, social security and family allowances are now the object of bitter attacks by management and the government, which finds them exorbitant and deems that they check productivity and the self-financing of enterprises.

If one reads the official speech between the lines, one finally comes to the conclusion of failure and bankruptcy. The government's main concern is to put an end to the resistance of the people and the unions, blowing alternately hot and cold, with savage repression one day and sweet promises the next.

The smokescreens will no longer deceive militants, who are now hardened and determined to give a political and economic content to the struggle of the Tunisian people for their total independence. The working masses and militants who restored its autonomy to the UGTT will make it a powerful, democratic, fighting, representative union.

Let there be no mistake! The independence of the country and trade union autonomy are the cardinal stakes of all the active or passive struggles taking place under our very eyes.

It is as a result of this double task that the crisis grew and will inevitably continue to grow, on the battlefield and not with an implicit or explicit agreement between a dying regime and a reformist opposition.

As on the eve of every new factor, feverish activity reigns in the corridors of government. Wassila Bourguiba, a past master at this game in the shadows, tries to give the impression that great changes are underway. That is how the regime has survived for over a quarter of a century, avoiding the worst every time that the menacing streets raised their voices. Some politicians out of favor with the masses and leading splinter groups, whose legislation has just revealed their limitations, fall into the subtle but sterile game of Dame Machivelli and a regime with its back against the wall.

The inability of the Socialist Democratic Movement (MDS), the Tunisian Communist Party and the Popular Unity Movement (MUP) to create organic and historic links with the masses to fight repression and wage the struggle for the country's independence and social justice now leads them to compromise. They were unable to propose a healthier, more dignified way out to the Tunisian people. But their path will lead to the most total failure because only the consciousness and assiduousness of the social and anti-imperialist movement are able to deal with the future of Tunisia and its people. For the Tunisian National Opposition Movement, that future will begin to take shape in a revolutionary alternative defined in six points:

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- 1) abrogating the institutions of the current system through the dissolution of Parliament and the Constitution; promulgating general amnesty, followed by an immediate release of all political and trade union prisoners, the return of political exiles and the rehabilitation of all martyrs of the Tunisian opposition;
- 2) instituting effective pluralism with no trade-offs;
- 3) forming a unity government emerging from a national front, to be in charge of affairs until the election of a president of the republic; during that period of transition, creating a council of sovereignty in charge of overseeing the government and the establishment of new institutions, which council could be dissolved following the election of the new president of the republic;
- 4) electing a constituent assembly in charge of drafting a new constitution to be submitted to the people;
- 5) electing a National Assembly and a president following the principles of the new constitution, with their prerogatives clearly defined by the new constitution.
- 6) As the fundamental law, the new constitution must also express the economic, social and cultural orientation of the people in their aspiration for real independence. The option can only be socialist, and it must affirm the desire for unity of the Maghreb and of the Arab nation, the African vocation of Tunisia and its decision to take its place among the nonaligned countries engaged in the anti-imperialist struggle.

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